

The Rights of Man and Popular Sovereignty in the  
French Revolution

1. The Origins of the ideas and how they were discussed.
2. Their influence before 1789: (a) in France, (b) in America.
3. The "principles of 1789".
4. The Jacobins.
5. The popular conception.
6. The Thermidorians & Directoire.
7. Babeuf.

I Origins etc.

- 1) Democrats of English Revolution of 17th cent. (Levellers, Diggers).  
Consult S. Woodhouse, Puritanism & Liberty.
- 2) English & French political "philosophers" of 17th - 18th cents: Locke's Treatise (s) of Civil Government; Montesquieu's theory of "balanced constitutions" and "separation of powers"; Rousseau's Social Contract . . .  
Consult: Sabine: History of Political Thought, chaps. 24-29;  
Hazard: European Thought in the Eighteenth Century;  
Talmon: The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy, pt. 1.  
Kingsley Martin: French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century chaps. 8, 9.
- 3) Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France & Paine's The Rights of Man Pt. I.  
Consult A. Cobban: The Debate on the French Revolution

II Their influence before 1789

- 1) In France. Rocquain: The Revolutionary Spirit preceding the French Revolution (v. bad, but have a look).  
Cobban: A History of Modern France (Pelican), vol. I, pp. 79-133 (esp. pp. 126-7).  
+ → *Hampson, N. Recueil de piéces - Bull. of John Rylands Library, XLVI, 2 (mar 1904)*
- 2) In America. English Historical Documents, vol. IX (for documents on the American Revolution).  
C.L. Becker: The Declaration of Independence: a study in the History of Political Ideas (Vintage Bks), chaps. 1 - 3.  
E.S. Morgan: The Birth of the Republic, chap. 5.  
M. Beloff: The Debate on the American Revolution (for the ideas of Otis, Paine, Jefferson).  
R.R. Palmer: The Age of the Democratic Revolution, chaps. 7, 8; Appendix IV.

III. The "Principles of 1789"

Introductory Reading

- Cobban: A History of Modern France, vol. I, pp. 133-~~end~~; or A. Goodwin: The French Revolution (paper-back).  
G. Lefebvre: The Coming of the French Revolution (do.)  
G. Lefebvre: The French Revolution from its Origins to 1793, chaps. 6-10  
A. de Tocqueville: / (for revolutionary propaganda abroad).  
The Old Regime & the French Revolution (Anchor Bks.).  
A. Young: Travels in France, 1789-90 (ed. Maxwell), pp. 130-245.  
Lord Elton: The Revolutionary Idea in France, 1789-1871, chaps. 1, 2.

Specialist Reading

- C.B. Rogers: The Spirit of Revolution in 1789  
Eric Thompson: Popular Sovereignty & the French Constituent Assembly 1789-1791.

- Documents (from J.H. Stewart: A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution)  
(1) Sieyes: What is the Third Estate? (p. 42-);  
(2) Cahiers of 1789 (p. 56-);  
(3) Tennis Court Oath etc. (pp. 85-88);



- (4) Reforms of 4 August 1789 (p. 106-);
- (5) Declaration of the Rights of Man, August 1789 (p. 113-);
- (6) Decree on Martial Law, 21/10/1789 (p. 117);
- (7) Abolition of hereditary titles etc. (p. 142-);
- (8) The Le Chapelier Law, June 1791 (p. 165-);
- (9) The Constitution of 1791 (pp. 229-62);
- (10) French foreign policy, April 1792 (pp. 283-4);
- (11) The "propaganda decrees", Nov.-Dec. 1792 (pp. 381-4).

#### IV. The Jacobins

##### Introductory Reading

Cobban and/or Goodwin, op.cit. M.J. Sydenham, The Girondins  
 R.R. Palmer: Twelve who ruled (on Committee of Public Safety).  
 J.M. Thompson: Robespierre and the French Revolution  
 Talmon, Origins of Totalitarian Democracy, Pt. 2.  
History Today: articles on Robespierre (April 1958); St. Just (June 1958);  
 Danton (July 1959).

##### Specialist Reading

A. Cobban: "The political ideas of Maximilien Robespierre during the period of the Convention", Eng. Hist. Review, Jan. 1946

##### Documents

- (1) Robespierre on trial of Louis XVI, 3/12/1792 (typed doc.);
- (2) Robespierre's draft of Declaration of Rights of Man, April 1793 (Stewart, p. 430-);
- (3) Declaration of the Rights of Man and Constitution of June 1793 (Stewart, pp. 454-68);
- (4) Law of the Maximum, 29/9/1793 (pp. 498-500);
- (5) Instruction of the "Temporary Commission" at Lyons, Nov. 1793 (Markov & Soboul Docs.);
- (6) Revolutionary Government, Oct.-Dec. 1793 (pp. 479-90);
- (7) The Ventose Decrees, 3/3/1794 (pp. 525-6);
- (8) Robespierre's last speech to Convention, 26/7/1794 (typed doc.);
- (9) Decree establishing levée en masse, 23/8/1793 (pp. 472-4) x

#### V. The popular Conception

##### Introductory Reading

G. Lefebvre: The Coming of the French Revolution, pts. 3 & 4.  
 A. Soboul: "Robespierre and the Popular Movement", Past & Present, April 1959.  
 N. Hampson: A Social History of the French Revolution  
 L. Gershoy: Review article on Soboul's book, Les Sans-culottes parisiens en l'an II, in Journal of Modern History, 1960 (2).  
 R. Cobb: "The People in the French Revolution", Past & Present, April, 1959.  
 G. Rude: The Crowd in the French Revolution.  
 A. Soboul: The Parisian Sans-culottes and the French Revolution 1793-4 (Clarendon Press, 1964)

##### Documents

- (1) The march to Versailles, 5 October 1789 (typed doc.);
- (2) E.L. Higgins: The French Revolution as told by Contemporaries (docs.), chap. IX: "The Mob goes to Versailles" (pp. 119-31);
- (3) A. Young on tiers état: Travels pp. 173-92.
- (4) Additional documents from Markov & Soboul, Die Sansculotten von Paris: Preface by G. Lefebvre and select documents (in French).

#### VI. The Thermidorians & Directoire

##### Introductory Reading

Cobban, op.cit., Pt. 3.

Documents: The Constitution of the Year III and declaration of the Rights & Duties of Man & Citizen. (October 1795) (Stewart, pp. 571-612).



VII. Babeuf's Conspiracy of the Equals, 1796.

Introductory Reading

David Thomson: The Babeuf Plot

K. Tonnesson: "The Babouvists: from Utopian to practical Socialism",  
Past & Present, July, 1962

J.L. Talmon, Origins of Totalitarian Democracy, Pt. 3.

+ Ann. hist. riv. some opinion no. 162 (over the 1960)

Documents: The doctrine of Babeuf, May 1796 (Stewart, pp. 656-7).